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Draft report

Transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management (programme element II.c)

Conclusions

1. The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) reiterated the importance of the Forest Principles, chapter 34 of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex) and decision 6/3 adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixth session, to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies in support of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. IFF emphasized the strong links among sustainable forest management and transfer of technologies, capacity-building and institution-building, investment and financing from both public and private sources.

2. Although not every constraint to sustainable forest management can be alleviated by the transfer of technology, IFF emphasized that improved access to and utilization of environmentally sound technologies have great potential for enhancing sustainable forest management. Indeed, policy environments and measures favourable to sustainable forest management and investment are as important as the availability and appropriate application of the technologies themselves.

3. Efforts to enhance technology cooperation through the development, transfer and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies should recognize the important but differentiated contributions of the public and private sectors, while stressing the governmental role in developing and fostering an enabling policy, legal and institutional framework.

4. National forest programmes, as described in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) on its fourth session (see E/CN.17/1997/12, para. 17 (a)), should facilitate

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development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies in support of sustainable forest management and forest products processing. There is a need to further the participation of interested parties in forest-related technology development and to facilitate efficient adaptation and use of technologies and know-how, in accordance with national legislation, through partnerships among the public and private sectors, including research centres, universities and companies, and indigenous people, local communities and non-governmental organizations.

5. There is a wide range of available environmentally sound technologies, particularly in developed countries, that can support sustainable forest management. The policies, actions and types of financing that are needed for efficient selection, transfer, adaptation and use of these technologies vary, depending on the type of technology, local conditions and intended use. They should be demand-driven and consistent with national priorities for sustainable forest management, as expressed in management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and, where appropriate, should be reflected in national forest programmes. IFF stressed that the international community should promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21.

6. Efforts for the comprehensive assessment of technology needs and suitability have been insufficient so far. Many countries, in particular developing countries, need to strengthen their capacities for assessment of the environmental soundness, economic sustainability and social impacts of technologies.

7. Developing low forest cover countries have technological needs related to, in particular, afforestation for land rehabilitation, reforestation and restoration of degraded forests and for sustainable management of existing, often unique, forests.

8. Opportunities do exist to finance and support North-South technology transfer through official development assistance (ODA). Further opportunities also exist to finance and support North-South cooperation in technology transfer through public and private partnerships, joint ventures and foreign direct investments. There is also an important role for international organizations in the dissemination and facilitation of transfer of existing knowledge. Efficient and effective private-sector involvement in North-South technology transfer depends on mutual interests and an appropriate enabling environment, including promoting policy instruments aimed at creating a favourable environment to attract foreign private investment. International and regional organizations have an important role to play in the field of forest-related technology transfer. Regional networks could contribute to a more effective and efficient use of already existing technologies.

9. South-South cooperation is complementary to North-South transfer of technology and know-how. There is potential for further strengthening of South-South transfer of technology and know-how. Technologies generated in the South may be more accessible, more applicable and less costly and have greater potential for diffusion than some technologies developed in the North. Environmentally sound indigenous technologies, including traditional forest-related knowledge, should be given special attention, as appropriate, and transfer of such technologies or know-how must be carried out with the consent of the holder and according to national legislation.

10. IFF recognized the importance of technologies related to biological resources (as defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity) of forests. In this respect, cooperation

between developed and developing countries should be strengthened on transferring and, as required, developing technologies for the sustainable use of biological resources (as defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity) of forests, as they relate to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests consistent with and building on progress under the Convention on Biological Diversity and without prejudice to the commitments undertaken by parties to the Convention within its scope.

11. To date, relatively little attention has been given to the need for increased technology and know-how diffusion to end-users through forest extension services. Some countries have, to that end, effective mechanisms and/or extension programmes, which have a significant potential to be emulated by a broader set of countries.

12. There is an urgent need for implementation of modern, appropriate environmentally sound wood energy technologies, which would enable more efficient use of waste and by-products created by forest logging and wood processing, as well as wood harvested for fuelwood, for both industrial and household uses.

13. Focused attention should be given to gender mainstreaming related to capacity-building and technology transfer, particularly in the context of wood energy use, tree cultivation for household energy use, sustainable forest management and tenure, and ownership of forests and lands designated for afforestation. Appropriate technologies for the use of wood as an energy source at the rural household level have a great potential to enhance the health and socio-economic status of women in many developing countries.

Proposals for action

14. IFF stressed the importance of implementing the IPF proposals for action on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In order to further their effective implementation, IFF:

(a) Urged countries, consistent with decision 6/3 of the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as paragraph 77 of the IPF proposals for action (E/CN.17/1997/12), to initiate actions towards the broadening and development of mechanisms and/or further initiatives to enhance the transfer of technology from developed countries to developing countries to promote sustainable forest management;

(b) Urged all countries to develop an enabling policy, legal and institutional framework that encourages appropriate public and private sector investments in environmentally sound technologies for sustainable forest management in line with the respective national forest programmes, where applicable;

(c) Urged countries and relevant international organizations to support the Strengthening of cooperation between institutions to facilitate the assessment of needs for adaptation and transfer of forest-related environmentally sound technologies through North-South and South-South cooperation. Those institutions recognized as centres of excellence should act as clearing houses, in line with Agenda 21, chapter 34, in order to expedite the flow of these technologies;

(d) Urged all countries to recognize the importance of the transfer of technologies to developing countries and economies in transition, including human and institutional capacity-building, as an integral part of the process of investment and sustainable development; and the importance of combining technology transfer with training, education and institutional strengthening in order to promote effective use and broad dissemination of environmentally sound technologies;

(e) Urged all countries, in particular developed countries, to take further concrete measures to promote and facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights in accordance with the relevant international and domestic laws, in order to put into further practice the recommendations of Agenda 21, the Commission on Sustainable Development and IPF, and in this context to mobilize further support for the development and application of appropriate technologies and corresponding know-how within these countries to enhance their capacities to implement sustainable forest management;

(f) Urged countries and relevant international organizations to consider practical measures to promote the diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to end-users, particularly in local communities in developing countries, through the efficient use of extension services;

(g) Urged countries and relevant international organizations to enhance partnerships, and to initiate, as appropriate, coordinate and cooperate in forest-related technical and financial assistance and capacity-building in respect of the transfer, development and application of environmentally sound technologies;

(h) Underscored the importance of assisting developing countries with low forest cover and those with fragile forest ecosystems in their efforts in respect of capacity-building that would facilitate the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to address those needs;

[(i) Urged countries to promote fair and equitable sharing of benefits, upon mutually agreed terms, of the utilization of forest biological resources, and the results of research and its applications, especially addressing the recognition to the origin of forest biological resources within their intellectual property rights, sui generis or other relevant systems for protection, as appropriate, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international agreements, and taking into account national law;]

An alternate text was suggested for paragraph (i).

Alt.[(i) [Encouraged] [Urged] countries to promote fair and equitable sharing of the results of research and development and the benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of [biological resources] [forest genetic resources] (as defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity), [especially addressing the recognition to the origin of forest biological resources within their intellectual property rights, sui generis or other relevant systems for [IPR] protection, as appropriate,] [on mutually agreed terms,] consistent with the relevant provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity [and taking into account national legislation and international and domestic law related to intellectual property rights;] [and other relevant international agreements and national legislation];]

Several delegations recalled that paragraph (j) was considered in working group 1, under paragraph 7 (c) of traditional forest-related knowledge, and therefore proposed its deletion in this programme element.

[(j) Encouraged countries to develop appropriate [national] mechanisms and/or measures to enable indigenous people, local communities and forest-dependent groups to realize the potential benefits of traditional forest-related knowledge in cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity, through the establishment and enforcement of intellectual property rights linked to this knowledge [including the giving of due recognition to the use of traditional forest-related knowledge in patent applications for technologies];]

The following alternate text was suggested for paragraph (j):

Alt.[(j) Encouraged countries to develop appropriate mechanisms and measures for the use of TRFK, consistent with the Convention of Biological Diversity such as the establishment and enforcement of TRFK related intellectual property rights as well as the prior informed consent from and due recognition of knowledge holders in patent applications so as to enable indigenous peoples, local communities and forest dependent groups to realize the potential benefits of their traditional forest related knowledge in technology development.]

(k) Urged all countries, in particular developed countries, to pursue actions that would facilitate the transfer, development and application of environmentally sound technologies for and analyse the implications of the use of wood and non-wood by-products created by forest harvesting and wood processing for industrial and domestic purposes, giving special attention to wood-waste materials as an energy source;

(l) Called upon countries to undertake steps to ensure equal opportunities for women, in particular indigenous women and women in rural areas, to become beneficiaries of environmentally sound forest-related technologies, know-how and extension services;

(m) Urged countries to strengthen outreach programmes targeted at women in the areas of education, training and microcredit, related to community development programmes and household use of wood, wood lots for fuelwood and energy-efficient cooking technology;

(n) Urged countries and relevant international organizations to use data and information that are disaggregated by gender in sectoral surveys and studies used in the development of technologies for sustainable forest management policies and projects.